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INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 6525
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 9219
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 5367
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 003408

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP, DRL, IO; NSC FOR PHU

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: THAI MFA OFFICIAL OFFERS LITTLE PROMISE OF ACTION
AGAINST BURMA

REF: A. SECSTATE 121418

[1](#)B. BANGKOK 3366 (AMBASSADOR RAISES)

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Classified By: Political Counselor George Kent, Reason 1.4 (B, D)

SUMMARY AND COMMENT

[1](#)1. (C) We delivered reftel points on the recent crackdown in Burma and the UNGA Third Committee resolution to Thai MFA East Asian Affairs Department Director Kallayana Vipattipumiprates on November 18. On the disturbing direction of developments, Kallayana responded that the MFA would not issue a public statement, but said he would raise the issues during a dinner scheduled later on November 18 with Burmese Deputy Foreign Minister Maung Myint. On the UNGA votes, Kallayana said there had been no change in Thai views since MFA Permanent Secretary Virasakdi Futrakul's November 10 meeting with Ambassador (reftel b). Kallayana stressed the role of the Tripartite Core Group (TCG) as the sole means of effective engagement between the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) and the international community, given the failure of Ibrahim Gambari's efforts as the UN Secretary General's envoy.

[1](#)2. (C) Comment: Given its complicated neighborly relations with Burma, the RTG is unlikely to take any action to reprimand Burma for the November crackdown on lawyers and pro-democracy activists, either bilaterally or as the current Chair of ASEAN. This restraint may contribute to the Thai advocacy of the TCG as the best means for the international community to engage the SPDC productively. End Summary and Comment.

Recent Crackdown Likened to Bad Movie Reruns

[1](#)3. (C) We delivered reftel points to Director Kallayana on November 18, urging that Thailand use its standing as ASEAN Chair to press the Burmese junta to move in the direction of releasing political prisoners and initiating a genuine dialogue, rather than jailing those whom the dialogue needs to involve. Kallayana, who served for many years at the Thai embassy in Rangoon, compared the latest SPDC crackdown to

"watching a movie over and over again." After reading the November 17 White House Press Statement condemning the Burmese actions, Kallayana told us that the RTG would not issue a similar public statement.

¶4. (C) When pushed on whether the RTG would approach Burma privately, Kallayana offered to raise the concerns at a dinner scheduled for November 18 with Burmese Deputy Foreign Minister Maung Myint, who was passing through Bangkok after conducting discussions with Bangladeshi officials over a border dispute. Kallayana's assistant confirmed to us on November 19 that he had conveyed the concerns to Maung Myint, who listened politely, but did not comment. (Note: Kallayana told us that the Thai assessed Maung Myint to be "a good listener," adding that Maung Myint had a direct line to Vice Senior General Maung Aye and, unlike the Burmese Foreign Minister and other deputy FMs, appeared willing to pass along messages bearing unpleasant news to superiors. Noting that Maung Myint had previously been the Regional Commander in charge of Karen State and suppressing the KNU along the Thai border, Kallayana stressed that Maung Myint's initial diplomatic exchanges with the Thai had been awkward, but that they had subsequently developed an ability to talk to each other. End Note.)

RTG Still Considering U.S. Request on No-Action Motion

¶5. (C) Kallayana told us that PermSec Virasakdi's November 10 comments to the Ambassador about the RTG's views on the Burma country resolution and no-action motion remained valid. In light of the disturbing developments in Burma, we urged him to engage his colleagues in the MFA's International Organizations Department to reconsider the RTG position on

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no-action motions.

TCG the Only Window to an SPDC in Transition?

¶6. (C) Kallayana stressed that a small opening existed through the TCG, and he urged all parties to keep the momentum going, since it presented an opportunity for western countries to work with the SPDC. He felt that the TCG remained Burma's sole means of engagement with the international community. Kallayana planned to attend the upcoming ASEAN High-level Task Force meeting in Rangoon, during which he would review the SPDC's Post-Nargis Recovery Report. Kallayana told us the report could be used to extend the humanitarian role of the TCG. According to Kallayana, it would be easier to expand international organizations' work into other areas within Burma once cooperation was established between the SPDC and humanitarian organizations.

¶7. (C) "We'd like to prepare people to vote in the election aware of the constitution and their choices," Kallayana said. Kallayana ruefully agreed, however, that the sham referendum in May conducted in the wake of Cyclone Nargis and the recent wave of sentencing gave little hope for freely contested or fair elections in 2010. He predicted the USDA was likely to dominate the election results, and seemed to be setting itself up organizationally like a Communist Party, with cells everywhere. The Thai saw the main dynamic in play currently as how the top two senior generals, Than Shwe and Maung Aye, could ease themselves out of power with full guarantees for themselves and their families to maintain their wealth and standing. Thura Shwe Mann appeared to be the figure who would emerge at the top of the power structure once the transition was complete, he suggested.

JOHN